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ABSTRACT

The booklet describes ways in which puppetry can promote growth in special and regular education students. Current usage is traced in four categories: puppetry as a demonstrative teaching tool, as an approach to help develop language and communication skills, as a therapeutic tool, and as a form of theater and school arts. Guidelines are presented for involving students in a puppet making experience, and the teacher is instructed to first identify objectives, choose a puppet type, construct puppet examples, and finally devise the total plan (which encompasses factors of motivation, materials, and creative puppet play.) Paper plate, stick, spoon and sock puppets are among the 17 types briefly described. Two additional sections analyze common materials and tools used in puppetry. Final remarks focus on the potential of puppetry for promoting students' personal growth and development. (CL)

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ARTS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION PROJECT OF PENNSYLVANIA

PUPPETRY:
OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUCCESS

DOUGLAS ROYSDON

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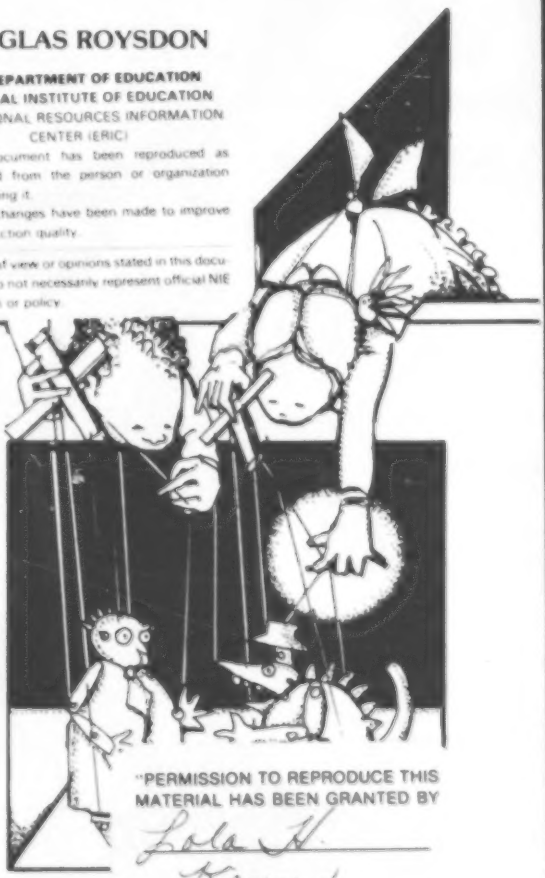

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PUPPETRY:
OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUCCESS

DOUGLAS ROYSDON

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Douglas Roysdon, Director of the Mock Turtle Marionette Theatre, has presented numerous performances in schools, community centers, museums, libraries, arts festivals and playgrounds. In addition to performing as a puppeteer and designing and crafting his own puppets, he also conducts puppet-making workshops for students and educators. Doug holds a Fine Arts degree from the University of Arizona and a certificate in Art Education from Kutztown State College. He served for five years as an Arts and Crafts Coordinator at the Lehigh County Senior Citizens Center. During this time he directed the Frail Elderly Program for disabled citizens and functioned as its primary instructor for three years. Doug has written and produced a number of original plays for marionettes, including *The Unmarked Present, Tom Tit Tot, The Trollene Queen*, and his current play, *The Changeling*.

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Introduction

Historically, art has served to promote some of mankind's finest values: intellectual and educational freedom, empathy toward others, and the worth of the individual. Like science and other major disciplines, art education supplies a unique point of view, a way to understand and explain life. A well-integrated art program, one that contributes to many areas of study, can educate students to view life in a broader and more exciting light. Such a program can encourage the adoption of principles that will have a positive effect on the students' interpersonal relations and attitudes about the community and the society as a whole. For art education to function in a dynamic way, however, two ideas must be taken seriously. First, art activities must be more than episodic; they must be everyday experiences that relate to the objectives of various lessons. Secondly, educators must encourage student creativity and individuality and recognize that both are invaluable and fragile.

Puppetry's unique blend of theater, literature and the visual arts allows a particularly effective integration of art and the curriculum. As a motivating activity, puppetry can illuminate a wide variety of subjects ranging from science and math to social studies. The application of puppetry takes many forms. It may be employed on an individual basis or in class or group activities at many levels of sophistication.

Puppetry has been applied very productively in special education. Its use as a therapeutic tool and in group learning situations is well documented. In addition, puppetry has proven valuable in providing motivation in the development of fine motor skills and in adding variety to repetitious exercises. But the arts, and in this case, puppetry, can also fill a crucial position in the attempt to educate the "whole child." The importance of such holistic education for exceptional children has been stressed by Maria Egg: "The harmony of our children's natures will be evoked and strengthened by the well-considered multifariousness of our educational efforts." (1968)

The purpose of this monograph is to address the many uses of puppetry in the schools, with a particular emphasis on special education, and to encourage the initiation of *complete* puppet experiences in the classroom. The complete puppet experience implies that the student make his/her own puppet in a creative way and that the student use the puppet in class activities of a truly educational nature. Suggestions for puppet construction and lesson preparation are provided, in addition to a guide to the literature. Hopefully, success in puppetry will inspire confidence in the teacher to try other art media.

Uses of Puppetry in Education

Puppetry, normally associated with children's entertainment, has a rich and varied history of usage. Puppets were used for religious purposes in the early Christian Church and still function in Indonesia as interpreters of morals and customs. They have long served as vehicles for political and social satire in Europe, especially in Greece, and in Turkey. The popular use of puppets expressly as children's theater is actually a relatively new phenomenon, dating from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As an educational device, puppetry is still in its infancy. The first serious usage of puppetry in American schools occurred in the twenties, when historical plays were widely produced.

During the last half century the application of puppetry to the educational needs of both normal and special groups has steadily broadened. Current usage of puppetry falls into four major categories. Puppetry has been used as a demonstrative instructional tool; as an aid in developing language and communication skills; as a therapeutic and diagnostic tool; and in art and theater.

PUPPETRY AS A DEMONSTRATIVE TEACHING TOOL

The most famous example of this instructional ploy is the Muppet troupe of Sesame Street. The simple strategy of taking subjects, such as mathematics, spelling, vocabulary, social studies, etc., and making them fun through puppetry is an accepted practice in teaching. As Barbara Koenig and Jeffrey Peyton explain (1977): "...puppets maintain and direct attention; (they) generate interest and an eagerness to participate." Often operated by teachers, specialized puppets can be made to represent a specific discipline, such as the vocabulary frog described by Koenig and Peyton (1977), the counting Count of Sesame Street, and Susan New Rivers' bookworm puppet for language development (1979).

Another popular approach to the use of puppets as instructional tools is the use of simple stick puppets as symbols. Easy to con-

struct for most groups, a symbolic stick puppet such as a flower puppet might be used by the teacher to lead a class discussion on springtime.

Ernest Siegel (1969) describes the use of this method with mentally retarded children. For example, using two hand puppets, one in each hand, the teacher can demonstrate the concept of opposites, that the two puppets are quite different characters by gesturing "sad" with one and "happy" with the other. Numerous pairs of opposites can be generated in this way—high and low, asleep and awake, front and back—as the child is motivated toward improvement in his/her ability to think conceptually.

Confino (1972) finds this method of puppet instruction particularly good for teaching everyday ideas by example. Hand puppets used to demonstrate dental hygiene, crossing streets and other daily functions retain attention and reinforce good habits without being dogmatic. The Bojabi Treehouse Puppet Theater of New Haven has found several uses for the demonstrator puppet. Among these is the "feeling face" puppet, a puppet with eyes and mouth manipulated from behind to change features. This puppet is used to lead discussions on feelings and to help students better understand their own emotions (Koenig and Peyton, 1977).

There are several limitations to the teacher/performer method of puppetry. Although class participation may be encouraged, the student remains in a far more passive position than in other forms of puppet usage. Another problem is that demonstrative methods require that the teacher practice and grow confident in theatrical skills; performing of this kind may be new to many teachers. Finally, there may be a tendency for the demonstrator puppets to become lecturers. This should be avoided at all costs, as a puppet that lectures will quickly lose its magic.

PUPPETRY IN DEVELOPING LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Puppetry is being used successfully to promote learning of a wide range of communication and language skills. It has been applied to such varied topics as pronunciation and listening skills, conceptualization, bilingual education, and speech therapy. A common technique used by educators is puppet storytelling. This activity involves groups of students, all with specific puppet characters, and a story with a large amount of dialogue. Lesley Mandel Morrow (1979) has several recommendations for success in this use of puppetry. She suggests that dialogue be approximated rather than memorized and that sock puppets are particularly effec-

tive in that their mouths can be made to move. She further recommends a number of appropriate stories in her bibliography.

Rosalyn Reich (1968) describes a puppet play she organized with a group of visually handicapped children using their own stuffed cloth puppets. Working with improvisatory dialogue, the children were asked to concentrate on the clarity of their ideas, pronunciation and choice of vocabulary. Motivated by the use of puppets and an appreciative audience, the students showed clear improvement in oral language. Reich also observed improvement in independent thinking and group cooperation.

A class puppet show organized by Fitzsimmons (1967) showed similar results among his speech impaired students. As a result of the puppet play, he cited a gain in "positive perception," in self-confidence, and in speech. Fitzsimmons suggests that puppetry offers an excellent opportunity for the speech impaired to relate at once verbally and nonverbally. He also noted improved group and teacher relations as a result of the puppet project.

Numerous other examples of puppetry's application to language and communications skills exist in the literature. Rod puppets were used by hearing impaired children in the New Mexico School for the Deaf to promote self-confidence before an audience and to aid speech improvement (Confino, 1972). Puppets are also used by speech therapists to spot pronunciation problems.

PUPPETRY AS A THERAPEUTIC TOOL

The discovery of puppetry as a therapeutic tool has aroused a good deal of excitement over the past two decades. Applications have been many and varied, including behavior modification; diagnosis and prescription; sociodrama and role playing; and the development of self-esteem. Lillie Pope (1974) describes puppetry's source of effectiveness: "Puppetry provides a singular and privileged vehicle for communication and messages that might otherwise be blocked." An interesting example of puppetry as a therapeutic tool has been cited by Carolyn G. Maurer (1977). She outlines a program which uses puppetry to help children locate and understand their feelings. Organized as a series of puppet shows in which major emotions (anger, sadness, happiness and fear) are featured, children are encouraged to respond to the puppets and discuss their own emotional experiences.

Settings for the therapeutic use of puppetry vary from individual therapy to group and performance therapy. Schuman et al. (1973) describe the use of puppetry with the emotionally ill. Patients were encouraged to play roles with puppets in simulated situations, with

subjects ranging from sexual inadequacies to drug related problems. The therapists found that these sessions could spur progress in other therapeutic activities. Group support derived from puppetry emerged as a key feature of this application of puppetry.

A significantly different approach to puppetry and group therapy is cited by Virginia Vidler (1972). A group of emotionally disturbed preadolescents was given ten one-hour puppetry sessions. Each session included a professional puppet presentation of a "real life situation." The children were allowed to stop the play at any time and react in any way they wished, thereby changing the direction of the play. Each of the comments made during the play by the students was addressed by the puppets. Teachers and caseworkers noticed positive behavior changes after these sessions. Some of the parents reported that the children were generally happier after this experience.

It is important to note that puppet therapy, while often successful, can backfire in inexperienced hands. Children with deep emotional problems should be dealt with by professionals. Yet, many special and normal students can profit from the use of puppetry in self exploration and identification in their own classrooms.

PUPPETRY IN THEATER AND SCHOOL ARTS

The most extensive use of puppetry in the schools occurs in theater and in art. In the art room, puppetry provides a unique opportunity to combine different fine motor skills in a single project. Students may be inspired to work harder on less developed skills. The wide range of puppet types makes puppetry an inexhaustible source of challenge and creativity for children and adolescents in programs of all descriptions.

Common applications of puppet theater include high school productions prepared for elementary school audiences, class plays, and student plays for the community and the PTA. These plays usually involve student-made puppets and often original or adaptational playwriting by students.

Instances of puppet productions undertaken by exceptional children have proven very successful. A puppetry workshop directed by the Bread and Puppet Theater generated numerous plays written by groups or individual children with learning disabilities (Pope, 1974). After making their own cloth and papier-mache hand puppets, the children wrote plays reflecting personal incidents. In performing these plays as groups or individuals, the children revealed their fears and struggles. More important, the facilitators of this project saw growth in self-esteem and academic achievement in

their students.

Robert L. Marion (1979) suggests a method for involving mentally retarded adolescents in the production of puppet plays. He points out the potential of such adolescents in aiding younger students to produce plays. This activity, he suggests, increases their social confidence and helps them to overcome problems in dealing with their peer groups.

Play production—puppet-making, writing and adapting scripts, stage and prop construction, acting and manipulating puppets—is potentially the richest of all puppet experiences. But it is also a labor of love requiring some skill and a great deal of commitment.

Organizing a Puppet-Making Experience

A truly rich puppet experience involves students in creatively making and creatively using puppets. Student-made puppets enhance the excitement and expressive possibilities of a lesson. Indeed, they can make a lesson personal and therefore more thoroughly absorbed.

The ability to organize a puppet-making activity or workshop for a specific class or purpose can be a very special tool for an educator. A teacher with such skills can adapt puppetry more freely to his/her existing lessons, or develop lessons around a specific puppet project. A major consideration in planning a puppet project is that it be designed so that all the students can be successful. The following steps are offered to assist the teacher in the planning and implementation of such an experience.

IDENTIFY OBJECTIVES

First, the teacher should determine what he/she wants the students to achieve, as individuals and as a group, through this puppetry experience. Although a total puppetry experience will involve students in the development of many skills—expressive/creative, motor, cognitive, social, communication, etc.—the teacher may wish to emphasize a particular skill area. In this case, one should plan to spend more time on that part of the process which addresses that skill area most. When identifying the objectives, start on the students' individual levels, then add a challenge within reach so that each can experience the joy and pride of achievement.

CHOOSE A PUPPET

The puppet types and designs offered in the literature are many and varied. The teacher may select one that presents just a face or a complete head, or he/she may prefer to use one that has a head

and arms or a full body. Many manipulation options exist also. The teacher may choose one that is "operated" by a stick, one finger, three fingers, a rod or strings. It may be relatively rigid, capable of only large, general movements, or it may have a movable mouth or other movable parts.

Much of the success of a puppet-making activity depends on the proper selection and adoption/adaptation of one of these designs. Important considerations are: how the puppet is to be used; the students' ages, interests, cognitive and manual abilities, attention span, etc.; classroom space flexibility; availability and appropriateness of materials and tools; and the teacher's expertise. A list of a variety of puppet types, chosen on the basis of durability, creative possibilities and adaptability to educational needs, is presented later, as well as some comments on materials and tools which may influence the choice of puppet.

As the teacher approaches this list of puppet types, he/she should keep in mind that each can be made to be as simple or complex as the students are capable of constructing. The following description of one puppet type is presented as an example of how this can be done. If all of the students have minimal skills, they can all work on the "simple" puppet format. However, if the students' skills vary, they can all work on the same puppet type, but at different levels of proficiency.

Stick Puppets

Simple stick puppet—minimal skills

Simple face drawn, painted or constructed on a precut square or circle of paper, a paper plate, or perhaps an envelope. A stick or tongue depressor is attached by the teacher.

Skill variations

No cutting skills

Child selects from a variety of precut paper or felt pieces and assorted materials and constructs facial features.

Child tears shapes from paper and assembles with glue.

Cutting skills

Child cuts shapes from strips of construction paper, assembles and glues.

Child creates facial features with markers or paints.

Moderately complex stick puppet—moderate skills

A figure is drawn on oaktag by child, cut out and attached to stick or tongue depressor for manipulation.

Skill variations

Shape of figure may be rough cut from oaktag. Students with more advanced cutting skills can cut detailed outer shape.

Details may be rendered in marker, paint, felt, paper and assorted materials including yarn, ribbon, and rickrack to add three-dimensional quality.

Complex stick puppets—advanced skills

A closely cut image with a pivoted limb, mouth or neck manipulated by a rod. Central image fixed to tongue depressor or stick for manipulation.

Skill variations

Cutting: straight, curved, decorative cutting

Simple mechanical construction

For varieties of this puppet which employ a facial profile with a movable mouth, attach cloth costume and hat with staples and glue.

Attach a greater variety of materials for details: found objects, pipe cleaners, folded paper, wood shavings.

CONSTRUCT PUPPET EXAMPLES

There are two reasons for the teacher to make example puppets. First, these examples will stimulate the students' interest and ideas. At least three puppets should be provided as examples, each

expressing different characters and, if appropriate, requiring different skill levels. Second, making these examples will allow the teacher to task analyze the puppet-making process and relate this to his/her students' abilities. For the teacher, the responsibility to master the chosen puppet is mandatory in order to gain personal confidence in every aspect of the design. If the teacher has any appreciable difficulty in constructing the puppets, or if it is anticipated that the students will, the design must be simplified or the puppet choice reconsidered.

DEVISE THE TOTAL PROJECT PLAN

The teacher should keep in mind his/her objectives and the practical information acquired during his/her puppet-making process when structuring the puppetry project. The plan, whether it consists of one lesson or many, will probably follow a sequence similar to the one offered below:

Introduction/Motivation:

The teacher should use the "example" puppets as springboards to generate the students' ideas about how they can make their own personal puppets, and *not* as examples to copy. The teacher may point out that his/her puppets already "exist," and that they need other, different puppets to join them for a specific purpose—indicate how the puppets will be used or what they will be doing. Variations on this simplistic introduction/motivation can be made, depending on the age and capabilities of the students. For example, the teacher may want to introduce cultural and/or historical styles and uses of puppets with slides, pictures or real models. The use of such advanced examples may be particularly good for older students who consider puppetry childish. Or, a very sophisticated puppet of another variety can introduce the examples to further inspire students by showing that there are other types of puppets and that all of them express and communicate. The possibilities are endless.

Distributing Materials:

Material distribution should be plotted in advance and should proceed in a careful, craftsmanlike manner. Chaotic distribution is always a bad beginning. In case of a tool shortage, staplers for instance, stations can be designated for access to these special items. Materials may also be available from a central location. Access to these materials should be as free as the classroom situation allows. If the students, however, are confused by a vast

array of all possible materials displayed at once, distribute only those necessary at a given time, or limit options. To add variety and to stimulate responsibility and thought, the students may bring in some special materials that will add individuality and interest to their particular puppets or to share with other students.

Formal Tasks:

Some puppets require preliminary forming or construction tasks that may or may not offer opportunities for creativity, such as making basic head or body shapes or structures. For example, if all students are covering balloons with papier-mache to make spherical heads, the forming process does not involve creativity; however, if the students are adding three-dimensional noses, ears, hair or hats of their own design, or are in some other way making design choices or altering the basic papier-mache head, then aesthetic considerations are operating. Ideally, the class should construct formal or common elements of the puppet first, and if necessary, in a directed, step-by-step manner. Note that sometimes formal elements may be required during or after the more creative stage, such as attaching bodies to heads. Whenever possible, finish the preliminary formal parts as a class in order to begin the next creative stage as a group. Some puppet types do not require formal tasks, and one goes immediately from the introduction to the "creative" stage.

The Creative Puppet-Making Stage:

Although some creativity may be involved in the formal stage, the major "creative stage" is that in which the student fully utilizes his/her own creativity in making his/her puppet unique and personal. This includes painting or cutting expressive features and adding decorative detail. If the formal stage is lengthy, it is advisable to begin the creative and expressive aspects of the puppet on a fresh, new day. The role of the teacher will shift dramatically from direct leadership to a supporting function. The teacher's major tasks will be to encourage the students' imaginative ideas, provide technical assistance, and guide the puppets to an aesthetic completion.

Creative Puppet Play:

Puppet-making activities should end with a bit of ceremony. Puppet christenings, introductions, parades and/or speeches instill pride in the children for their newly-born puppets. Some students will need time and guidance in trying out the variety of gestures and voices of which their puppets are capable. The

teacher may need to lead them in a series of discovery activities or actions so they do not limit themselves to high, squeaky voices and stereotyped movements, such as biting or fighting, without trying other options. Small groups of students can bring their puppets into improvised conversations, or they can develop plays around their particular puppet characters. In the introduction, the teacher may want to focus on a theme, such as the circus, and have the students design their puppets to fit into that format for a concerted puppet play effort. The child's reading lesson may be "spoken" by the puppet, or social problems may be worked out through puppet role-playing. The teacher may choose to enhance the puppet experience with a simple or elaborate stage, or screens for shadow play, or environments—the students may provide many exciting ideas for enrichment or extensions.

Notes on Puppet Types

Many books are available which present a wide variety of puppets and construction ideas. This brief overview merely suggests the many options teachers have.

PAPER PLATE PUPPET:

Simple faces drawn or pasted on paper plates with a stick attached for manipulation; cutting operations can be omitted for lower functioning groups; can be worn as a head attachment by quadriplegic children (American Alliance, 1978).

STICK PUPPET:

Paper or cardboard puppet attached to stick; good for K-3 and young retarded groups; easy to cut and decorate in a large version. For children incapable of creating facial image, symbolic versions may be considered; easily recognizable animal forms or textured versions may be particularly useful.

SPOON PUPPET:

Wooden spoon with face painted on scoop, handle decorated with paper or cloth; faces require fairly good control of paint and puppets can be expensive; but they require few cutting skills and are extremely durable.

FINGER PUPPET:

Small cloth or paper sheath with face and costume, can be difficult for children who have little control of detail; excellent for intimate lessons and small group games; recommended for some children who need help with finger coordination.

FIST/GLOVE PUPPET:

Mouth, eyes, hair, etc. applied directly to hand, the thumb and forefinger providing mouth movement (if using paint directly on the skin, be sure it is washable and non-toxic); gloves provide a permanent version; a funny puppet capable of some variety in expression; requires specialized motor control for construction and manipulation; a good puppet for short, specific activities.

BODY PUPPET:

Large paper, cloth or cardboard human form with hole cut out for puppeteer's face or mask, or face can be filled in and puppet worn around neck using a string attached to top; useful in role playing activities (Gervase, 1975); good for children who are incapable of small detail work; recommended for the visually impaired because of its large size, small amount of detail and ease of performance; allows the hearing impaired student's hands free for signing.

SOCK PUPPET:

Standard version employs sock with a cardboard insert for mouth—eyes, hair, nose are also added; an excellent puppet for ease of construction and manipulative ability; good for language lessons because of expressive mouth; a good introduction to hand puppets for young and lower functioning groups because limited manipulation can still be effective; especially good for visually impaired students because they can feel all of its expressions and actions.

PAPER BAG PUPPET:

The most popular version uses bottom fold of bag for a movable mouth—eyes, ears, and sometimes clothes are glued or painted; a visually expressive puppet with great design possiblities; large enough to allow for easy or detailed construction; a good choice for combining media (yarn, objects, paper, paint, etc.); however, it is not durable and is of limited value for play productions because profile is not particularly good.

HAND PUPPET:

Essentially a specialized glove with head, hands, etc., most expressive and versatile of the simple puppets; traditional in profes-

sional puppetry and in the classroom; used by counselors and therapists because of easy manipulation and expressiveness; great creative and performance possibilities.

SOCK AND ROD PUPPET:

Stuffed sock face on pole with costume; a simple rod puppet with good creative possibilities; an intermediate step between stick and hand puppets; good for outdoor activities because of size and durability; especially good for students who cannot get their hand into a glove or manipulate fingers—the stick can be padded for easier grip.

CARDBOARD ROD PUPPET:

A stick puppet with a movable limb, head or mouth manipulated by an accessory rod; excellent preparation for shadow puppets; requires some physical strength to cut poster board for construction; large colorful versions can be particularly effective.

HAND AND ROD PUPPET:

A hand puppet with rod attached to one or more hands allowing hands as well as mouth to move; a step above hand puppets in movement and performance possibilities; practice in manipulation is necessary; "Kermit the Frog" is an example of this type of puppet.

CENTRAL SHAFT ROD PUPPET:

Essentially a doll which is manipulated from below by several rods; good for older groups; a good theatrical puppet, but stiffer and more limited than marionettes.

SHADOW SILHOUETTE PUPPET:

A stick puppet with or without a movable rod-manipulated limb, intended for use on a shadow screen; the simplest of the shadow puppets; as shadow puppets base their effectiveness on strong visual imagery, and are less dependent on verbalization, this puppet may be considered for use with the hearing impaired.

TRANSLUCENT/SHADOW PUPPET:

Jointed poster board or x-ray film images with "windows" of color

and detail which project through backlighted screen; this is a colorful puppet with high visual impact; in its complex form, it requires manual dexterity in cutting intricate negative shapes to create the "windows" in which to insert the translucent cellophane, acetate or theatre gel.

MARIONETTE/CLOTH:

A weighted doll made of cloth and manipulated by overhead control and strings; an excellent project for sixth to ninth graders possessing sewing skills; great creative possiblities; not as effective as wooden marionettes, because the puppet lacks the crisp joints necessary for smooth and dramatic movement.

MARIONETTE/WOOD:

A weighted doll made of wood and other materials manipulated by an overhead control and strings, requires some wood-working ability and sufficient tools; an excellent project at the high school level; special stage and a great deal of practice in manipulation required.

Material Analysis

An understanding of the materials used in puppetry can be crucial to the success of a puppet-making workshop or project. A poor choice of materials can result in shocking failure, a failure that a child with low self-esteem may blame on him/herself. A shadow puppet, for instance, can be a rather simple type of puppet. Its construction, however, requires the ability to cut poster board, a skill that many children have neither the strength nor the ability to perform. Clearly, for the child to succeed, the teacher must circumvent this problem in materials; to solve the posterboard problem, for example, some educators have adopted the use of x-ray film for shadow puppets.

It is in the area of selecting and managing the use of materials that the teacher's ingenuity is called forth. Any problems with materials can be solved by adjusting the material used, the technique for using it or the result expected. The teacher's willingness to suggest and/or accept unconventional possibilities may be the key for the students to have a truly expressive and satisfying experience. This involves both brainstorming ahead of time and flexibly trying options with the students during the lesson.

A brief introductory discussion of common materials used in puppetry is presented below.

GLUE:

As a general rule, white glue is dependable for most puppet projects. One should avoid the use of paste, particularly in stress areas. Glue can, however, be an enemy—overgluing can mar otherwise well-fashioned puppets. The safest and most effective application of glue is with popsicle sticks or toothpicks. For adhering paper to paper, rubber cream glue can be used effectively. Since it has a more solid consistency than liquid glue, it dries more quickly and is easier to manage.

FELT:

Felt is an exciting and versatile medium. One should preserve felt by careful gluing and cutting with long smooth strokes. An effort should be made to find real felt—some synthetic felts do not glue properly.

PAPER:

Paper comes in a wide variety of weights and textures. Oaktag is ideal for stick puppets, due to its durability. Beware of papers that will not hold up to usage, such as manila, wrapping paper, etc. Poster board is recommended for puppets that will receive real wear but it requires strength and advanced cutting skills.

PAINT:

One may need to avoid the use of paint boxes with some children. Rather, mix paints in cups (weighted if possible) with individual brushes. Acrylics are good in that they are less messy, purer and brighter in color. They do, however, require "working up" in the tube state. This may be a troublesome step with younger and lower functioning children. Mix tempera well and keep it on the thicker side for truer color.

YARN:

Yarn can be used for decoration and detail work. Beware of overgluing. It is generally best to apply glue to areas to be decorated with yarn and let the glue partially dry. Then apply an excessive amount of yarn and trim to proper proportions when dry.

FABRICS:

Be careful with large prints, which can dominate the student's creative details. Cotton fabrics are appropriate for most uses in that they glue and cut best. Fraying can be controlled by forcing white glue into border areas and trimming when dry. Due to fraying, cotton fabrics may not be appropriate for small details in the puppet's costume.

HEAD MATERIALS:

Puppet heads can be made of a wide variety of materials: papier-

mache, styrofoam, vegetables, clay, wood, etc. Papier-mache is among the best of these materials in that it is versatile in modeling and it invites an expressive use of paint. It is, however, messy and does require patience and some skill in handling. Styrofoam balls are excellent with felt and can be made paintable with an undercoat. Clay is heavy and impermanent. Vegetables, such as turnips and potatoes, are used for puppet heads but have the clear disadvantage of spoilage. Gourds, however, can make interesting heads while remaining fairly permanent.

FOUND OBJECTS:

Small items brought into the classroom from home can often provide creative details for a puppet. Bits of tin, bottle caps, toy parts, objects taken from machines are but a few of the possibilities. These objects may be collected by the student for his/her own use or collected over the school year and retained in a common box in the classroom.

Tool Analysis

Properly appraising the student's ability to use classroom tools is very important in a puppet-making project. For the special and normal child alike, proficiency in the use of tools must be achieved sequentially. Therefore, it is extremely important, particularly with lower functioning students, that the teacher help them develop the fine motor skills necessary for the chosen puppet.

SCISSORS:

Sharp, pointed scissors, though of great benefit to an art project, are obviously inappropriate for classroom use among very young or emotionally disturbed students. An attempt should be made, therefore, to buy blunt scissors of good quality for these individuals or groups. For children with cutting problems, guiding scissors are also available. For most children, cutting begins with tearing paper. This primitive skill can be used to good advantage in art-related projects such as paste-up and design. The use of scissors develops roughly in this order: cutting narrow strips, cutting straight lines, cutting curved lines, cutting out simple forms, cutting along drawn lines, cutting simple forms on drawn lines and on to more advanced uses.

BRUSHES:

Poor and ill-kept brushes are a handicap for all students. They place a double burden on the exceptional child. It is wise to buy the best brushes the budget will allow and then handle them carefully. The development of painting skills includes the following stages: creating broad swatches of color on a page, random or pleasing use of color in separated areas, thoughtful choice of color for specific areas, ability to control the brush to draw lines and fill in color or paint shapes, continued refinement in creativity and application.

SEWING EQUIPMENT:

Sewing is a major problem in puppetry (especially class projects) in the grade school. It can often be circumvented by replacing stitches with glue and staple seams. The development of sewing skills might be pursued in the following ways: following contours on outlines with buttons, piercing simple dot patterns on oaktag and lacing with heavy thread; piercing and lacing more complicated forms, e.g. butterflies; lacing pierced forms together, lacing materials such as leather. Sewing simple forms with large, blunt stitchery needles and yarn in loosely woven fabric, such as burlap, can be a good introduction to sewing.

GRAPHIC MEDIA:

Pencils, crayons, markers, chalk and other marking tools are basic to the needs of puppet-making. The ability to draw facial features, however primitive, is generally a prerequisite to puppet design. For those children who cannot generate facial imagery for puppetry, the possibility of using symbolic stick puppets (trees, suns, etc.) remains.

PATTERNS/GUIDES/RULERS:

Educators may wish to make use of patterns, templates and linear guides to develop control of various media in elementary and special education. This use of patterns with fabrics can present problems. Poorly pinned patterns can lead to inaccurate reproduction and slow a project down unnecessarily. Direct transfer of patterns to light fabrics using oaktag templates is the easiest method, but requires a suitable number of templates.

Creativity and Character: A Practical Analysis

All quality puppets have four essential characteristics. They move well and effectively. They can stand the rigors of hard use. They are sufficiently attractive to draw the viewer's attention. Finally, a quality puppet is unique; it is an expression of the individual who made it. All of these qualities are within the grasp of the student puppeteer, given the correct choice of puppet.

An increasing respect for children's needs and abilities in the creative arts has grown over the course of this century. This appreciation for children's art, coupled with improved teaching methods, has had an important impact on modern education. Among those areas touched is special education.

While the creative capacities of blind, deaf, and physically handicapped students have not been seriously doubted, it is only relatively recently that a sophisticated approach to the artistic needs of mentally retarded students has been taken. Gaitskell (1953), conceding that artistic ability can be adversely affected by low intellect, vouches for the exceptional child's capacity to create. The work of retarded children, he suggests, "is original in the sense that it is a product of their *own* efforts to make statements about their *own* thoughts and feelings, resulting from their *own* experiences in life." Maria Egg (1968) emphasizes the role of the teacher in encouraging creative responses from exceptional children.

One of the most effective means for motivating the student's imagination through puppet-making is in the study of character. Example themes include: colors and emotions, voices, names, physical characteristics, feelings, types of people, professions and costumes.

In addition to motivating discussions, a whole series of theatre and social games and exercises might prove useful in unlocking hidden creative potential in students. Social exercises such as communal handshakes, self assertion exercises and role playing games provide excellent creative incentive for some special and normal children alike.

Setting artistic parameters may sometimes be necessary. As chaos and expression are not too distant relatives, certain "high impact" materials, such as fuzzy orange cloth, could be kept in scarce supply to avoid a proliferation of orange monsters. Cloth and paper can be precut to chosen sizes with the suggestion that the children approximate shapes (collars, hats, etc.) using as much of the pre-cut material as possible.

Guiding the creative work of students can be challenging. The teacher should promote the child's independent creativity as much as possible, but he/she must recognize that children do make bad decisions that can ruin good puppets. The child's perception of a "good" puppet, however, may be very different from that of the teacher. Always respect the child's right to be the final judge. The teacher must act with invincible patience, while keeping the child's goals securely in place.

Final Remarks

Puppetry represents one tool, one possibility, for promoting the personal growth and development of the student. In spite of its variety of approach and application, puppetry can be misused. If used too often, puppets can lose their magic. If puppets are constructed en masse, with no concern for creativity, they can become busy work. Maria Egg underscores this educational hazard: "The danger exists that something that was originally vital will degenerate into empty formalism." (1968).

Puppetry should be used within the same structure of goals and objectives applied to other areas of teaching. Structured use will not make puppetry a less exciting and vigorous pursuit for the student. It will, however, ensure that puppetry will be used seriously and with a purpose and that the potential benefits of puppetry, such as enhancement of communication skills, self image, group cooperation and holistic education for exceptional students, can be realized.

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